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ASSYRIAN AND URARTIAN METALWORK: INDEPENDENCE OR INTERDEPENDENCE?

JOHN CURTIS

1. Introduction

When I was invited to present a paper at this conference, the organisers suggested I should speak on 'Urartian influence on Assyrian metalwork'. My immediate reaction was that a more appropriate title would be 'Assyrian influence on Urartian metalwork', for it seemed to me that the influence from Assyria to Urartu was much stronger than *vice versa*. Like many things in Near Eastern archaeology, however, the situation is not as clear-cut as we might like it to be. While I still believe that the predominant influence was from Assyria to Urartu, I am now more inclined to accept that there may have been some reciprocal influences, particularly in the second half of the 8th century BC. Therefore, I have decided to call this paper 'Assyrian and Urartian Metalwork: Independence or Interdependence?'.[1]

As an example of the traditional view of the formation and growth of the Urartian state, and the role of Assyria in that process, we can do no better than quote from R.D. Barnett's chapter in the *Cambridge Ancient History*. He wrote (1982: 336-337):

> While the hammer-blows of Ashurnasirpal and Shalmaneser were clearly the decisive factors causing Urartu to react, reorganise, and resist, it cannot be doubted that the Assyrian systems of military organisation, logistics and general technology became to the Urartians an object of deep interest and study and inspired Arame and his successors to embark on a systematic revolution of ideas and plans. Set against the bleak account of Urartian defeats, one senses the beginnings of a deep cultural and technological indebtedness to Assyria apparently dating from this time. The arts of metal-working, even the production of iron or mild-steel tools and weapons, they may have learnt from the smiths of Kulkhai (Colchis) or Metsamor across the Aras river. Equipped with tools of new hardness, the Urartians may well have learnt from Assyria the methods and practice of building with accurately cut stone, ... one cannot but be struck by the fact that the earliest inscriptions of the Urartian dynasty (by Sarduri I) ... are written in the Assyrian script and language.

The implication here, of course, is that Urartian material culture borrowed heavily from Assyria. This would have included metalwork, although Barnett concedes that metalworking skills may have been derived from elsewhere or even have been indigenous. In order to test Barnett's hypothesis, it seemed to me that the most useful way to approach this subject would be to look in the first instance at the Assyrian sources, to see what contacts there were with Urartu and how the Urartians were perceived by the Assyrians.

2. Assyrian contacts with Urartu

(i) The first mention of the name that later became Urartu is in the Middle Assyrian period. At the beginning of his reign, Shalmaneser I (1273-1244) invaded Uruatri/Uratri on the grounds that its peoples had rebelled against him, implying that there had previously been some form of Assyrian dominance, even if purely nominal. Now Uruatri is thought to have been 'one of a large number of Hurrian principalities in the

[1] It is a great honour to offer this paper to Stephan Kroll in celebration of his 65th birthday.

mountainous regions round Lake Van and Lake Urmia, known to the Assyrians from the time of Tukulti-Ninurta I as the Nairi Lands' (Munn-Rankin 1975: 279). Shalmaneser I claims to have conquered eight lands, sacked about 50 towns and villages, imposed tribute on the inhabitants, and carried off young men to Ashur as hostages (Grayson 1972: 81 §527; 1987: A.0.77.1 ll. 22-46).

(ii) His son Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243-1207) invaded the Nairi Lands and described his campaign there as follows: 'with my surpassingly strong might I frequently traversed mighty mountains (and) extremely difficult ranges, the paths of which no other king knew. I cut into their mountains with copper picks (and) widened their impassable paths. I did battle with forty kings of the land Nairi (and) brought about the defeat of their army. (Thus) I became lord of all their lands' and 'levied upon them tribute and impost forever' (Grayson 1972: 118-119 §773; 1987: A.0.78.23 ll. 27-55).

(iii) Under Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076) the Assyrian army 'conquered the entire land of Sugu', part of the land Habhu (Grayson 1976: 11 §27; 1991: A.0.87.1 iv 7-31). According to Grayson, Habhu 'was a geographical rather than a political term;[2] its area included both banks of the upper Tigris stretching roughly from the source of the Greater Zab west to somewhere between the headwaters of the Tigris and the upper Euphrates at Kummuhu (Commagene)' and would eventually become part of the kingdom of Urartu (Urartru, Uruatri)' (Grayson 1982: 250). Tiglath-pileser I again penetrated deep into the Nairi lands and defeated a coalition of 23 kings, chasing them 'at arrowpoint as far as the Upper Sea' (i.e. Lake Van) (Grayson 1976: 12-13 §30; 1991: A.0.77.1 iv 43 – v 21). 120 chariots with equipment were seized, together with horses, mules and donkeys. Hostages were taken and an annual tribute of 1,200 horses and 2,000 cattle was imposed on the Nairi kings. Tiglath-pileser I recorded in one of his inscriptions at the Tigris Tunnel three invasions of the Nairi Lands and his conquests from the 'great sea of the land Amurru' to 'the sea of the land(s) Nairi' (Lake Van) (Grayson 1976: 38 §152; 1991: A.0.87.15) In a second inscription he is described as 'conqueror of the lands Nairi from the land Tummu to the land Dayenu, conqueror of the land Habhu to the Great Sea (Grayson 1976: 38 §155; 1991: A.0.87.16).

(iv) Ashur-bel-kala (1073-1056) marched to the land Habhu and conquered various cities there (Grayson 1976: 49 §219; 1991: A.0.89.1 ll. 12-13).

(v) In the reign of Adad-nirari II (911-891) there were several campaigns to the north against Habhu and Nairi. He campaigned against Habhu... and 'Qumanu as far as the lands of Mehru, Salua and Urartru' (Grayson 1982: 86 §419; 1991: A.0.99.2 ll. 23-25) and 'marched to the lands Nairi and conquered the interior of the land Habhu' (Grayson 1976: 86 §421; 1991: A.0. 99.2 ll. 30-33).

(vi) Ashurnasirpal II (883-859) penetrated five times into the northern regions that may be loosely defined as greater Urartu. In the first expedition of his reign (883) he conquered a number of cities in the land of Habhu (Grayson 1991: A.0.101.1 i 58-69). In 882 BC he proceeded by way of the upper Tigris to Tushha (Ziyaret Tepe),[3] where he received tribute from, among others, the kings of the Nairi lands; on his way back from Tushha, he conquered cities of the land of Habhu (ii 12-23). It was during the 882 campaign that Ashurnasirpal erected a statue at the River Subnat beside the statues of Tiglath-pileser I and Tukulti-Ninurta II (Grayson 1976: 255). In 879 BC he marched again to Tushha, crossed the Tigris and received tribute from the land of Habhu (ii 91-97). Then in 866 BC, after conquering several cities in Habhu, 'all of the land (of) Habhu submitted to Ashurnasirpal and he appointed a governor over them' (iii 92-113). There must also have been one later expedition 'to the land of Urartu' as mentioned in display texts (Grayson 1976: 255).

Of particular interest to us is the tribute received by Ashurnasirpal. From the kings of the Nairi lands in 882 BC he received 'chariots, horses, mules, silver, gold, bronze, casseroles, oxen, sheep (and) wine'. He also 'imposed corvée upon the lands Nairi.' Then in 879 BC, the tribute received from the land of Habhu consisted of 'oxen, sheep, wine, bronze casseroles, bronze tubs, (and) bronze armour'.

[2] A similar view is expressed by Radner this volume Chapter 17 and n. 2 as opposed to the proposals of Fuchs 2000.

[3] For discussion of this campaign see Radner & Schachner 2001.

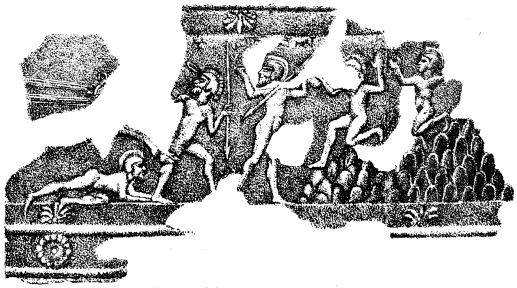

Fig. 31.01. Section of bronze band (L2) from the Gates of Ashurnasirpal II in the Mamu Temple at Balawat. Drawing by Marjorie Howard.

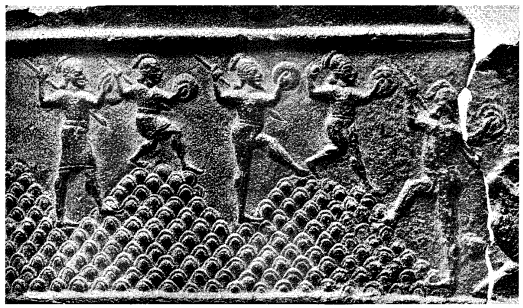

Fig. 31.02. Detail from a bronze band of the Shalmaneser III Balawat Gates showing a campaign in Urartu (King 1915: Pl. XXXVII).

(vii) Dating from the time of Ashurnasirpal II we have the first representation of people who may be Urartians. One of the bronze bands from the gates set up by Ashurnasirpal in the Temple of Mamu at Balawat[4] shows the Assyrian army fighting an enemy in a mountainous landscape (Band L2, Curtis & Tallis (eds.) 2008: figs. 59-60). The enemy soldiers have crested helmets like the Urartians on the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III (see below), and are either dressed in short tunics with broad belts or are naked except for their helmets (Fig. 31.01). They are armed only with spears. By contrast, the Assyrian army has horses and chariots and the soldiers are well equipped with bows, quivers and helmets. The intention seems to be to stress the impoverished and underdeveloped nature of the Urartian military.

(viii) Shalmaneser III campaigned against Urartu in his 1st, 3rd, 15th, 27th and 31st years. In his first year he sacked the fortress of Sugunia belonging to Aramu the Urartian, after which he set up a stela by the shore of Lake Van[5] ('the sea of the land Nairi') (Grayson 1996: A.0.102.1 ll. 29-40). In his third year he sacked the fortress of Arzashkun, also belonging to Aramu the Urartian (A.0.102.6 i 57 – ii 2). In his fifteenth year Shalmaneser marched to the land Nairi where he carved a rock relief and an inscription at the source of the Tigris. After that, he razed, destroyed, (and) burned the cities of Aramu, the Urartian, as far as the source of the Euphrates (A.0.102.6: iii 34-45). In the campaigns of the 27th and 31st years the Assyrian army was under the command of the *turtanu* (field marshal) Daian-Ashur. In the 27th year Seduri the Urartian (presumably Sarduri) was defeated (A.0.102.16 ll. 228-244), and in the 31st year the Assyrian army advanced 'as far as the land of the Urartians' (A.0.102.16 ll. 320-341).

(ix) The Annals of the reign of Shalmaneser do not record interesting lists of booty specifically linked to the Urartians, but we are fortunate in that the events of the campaigns in the 1st, 3rd and 15th years are graphically depicted on four different bands of the bronze gates set up by Shalmaneser at Balawat (R7 [= BM124662], R5 [= BM 124659], L7 [= BM124652], L6 [= BM124656]; King 1915: pls. 1-12, 37-42, 54-59). On these bands the Urartians are generally shown wearing short tunics with broad belts, crested helmets and boots with curled-up toes (Fig. 31.02). They usually carry spears and round shields. Even when the soldiers are shown naked, after they have been defeated or taken prisoner, they still wear crested helmets, presumably because this is the most distinctive feature of their costume and helps them to be readily identified.

(x) It needs to be stressed that up to this point there is nothing remarkable about the type or amount of tribute or booty that is being received from the Urartians, and what is described is very similar to the sort of tribute that the Assyrians were receiving from other peoples with whom they came into contact, such as the Aramaean and Neo-Hittite states to the west of Assyria. There are no indications, then, that before or

[4] These gates were in the Mosul Museum but have now been extensively looted.

[5] For the suggestion that in this case Lake Urmia rather than Lake Van is meant see Fuchs this volume Chapter 09: §2.1 and Kroll this volume Chapter 10: n. 1 with references to Salvini 1995a: 28 and Schachner 2007: Abb. 158.

even during the time of Shalmaneser the Assyrians saw the Urartians as great manufacturers or providers of bronzework.[6] All this changed, however, in the reign of Sargon, when not only do we have a full account of the riches seized from the city of Musasir[7] but we also have a depiction on a relief of the Temple of Haldi in that city during the looting (Fig. 31.03). First, though, there were further campaigns against Urartu, or clashes with Urartu, in the reigns of Shamshi-Adad V (823-811 BC), Shalmaneser IV (782-773 BC), Ashur-nirari V (754-745 BC), and Tiglath-pileser III (744-727 BC).[8]

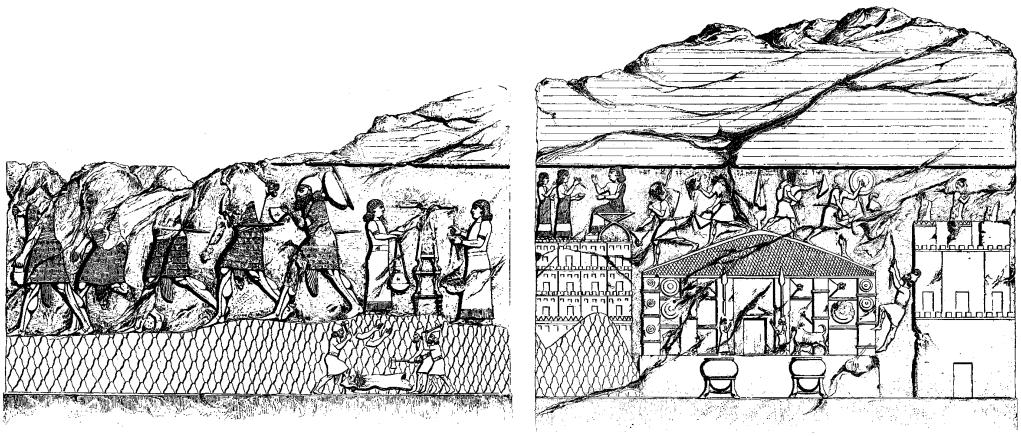

Fig. 31.03. Reliefs from Sargon's Palace at Khorsabad showing the sack of Musasir (Botta 1849-50: II pls. 140-141).

(xi) In the account of his 8th campaign, Sargon described how he attacked the city of Musasir whose ruler Urzana was in league with the Urartian king Rusa. First, he removed from Urzana's palace about 1040 kg of gold and about 5060 kg of silver, and more than 400 kg of objects made from precious metal. These included '6 gold swords... gold daggers, gold fly-whisks ... 11 silver bowls with lids, belonging to Rusa, bowls with golden handles from the land of Tabal ... spears of gilded silver' (Piotrovskij 1967: 9). He then turned his attention to the Temple of Haldi, from which he removed an even greater quantity of booty, including 109 tons of bronze ingots. The list is long, and in terms of metal includes 6 gold shields 'from whose centres sprang the heads of dogs with bared fangs', heavy silver shields 'whose bosses were in the shape of heads of monsters, lions and wild bulls', gold gate furniture and fastenings, silver spears, bows and arrows, silver chariots, '393 silver cups, heavy and light, products of Assyria, Urartu and Habhu', a silver couch inlaid with precious stones and gold (for the god), 25,212 copper shields, 1514 copper javelins, 305,412 copper daggers, 607 copper vessels, and 3 heavy bronze cauldrons. There were massive copper (bronze) statues of 4 doorway guardian figures, of a bull and cow and calf, of the Urartian kings Sarduri, Argishti, and Rusa,[9] the latter with two horses and a 'charioteer' (Piotrovskij 1967: 9-10).

[6] At the conference, Paul Zimansky kindly drew my attention to the book by Oktay Belli and Erkan Konyar on *Early Iron Age Fortresses and Necropoleis in East Anatolia* (2003) in which it is argued (p. 98) that in the Early Iron Age, iron objects outnumbered bronze objects because of difficulties in obtaining tin. It was not until the last quarter of the 9th century BC when the Urartian kingdom began to take control of trade routes that the necessary supply of tin was assured and the bronze industry was able to develop rapidly.

[7] It has commonly been assumed that Musasir was an Urartian city, because of the presence of the principal temple of Haldi, the head of the Urartian pantheon, and because of its close connections with the Urartian royal family, but Radner (this volume Chapter 17) classifies Musasir as an independent buffer state between Assyria and Urartu. Nevertheless, since much of the bronze work looted from the temple of Haldi had been dedicated by the kings of Urartu and some is explicitly said to be products of Urartu, Sargon's booty would have included many objects of Urartian workmanship.

[8] For details see Fuchs this volume Chapter 09 with further references.

[9] For discussions of the identification of Sarduri see Seidl 2004: 125-126 and n. 701, who suggested that this Sarduri was not a king of Urartu, and of the identification of Rusa see Roaf this volume Chapter 14.

(xii) The sack of Musasir is shown on two slabs (3-4, Fig. 31.03) in Room 13 of Sargon's Palace at Khorsabad (Botta 1849-1850, pls. 140-141; Albenda 1986, pl. 133). On the right-hand slab (no. 4) three buildings are shown. On the left is a 3 to 4 storey fortified building standing on a hill, on the flat roof of which is seated an Assyrian on a cross-legged stool. Facing him are two officials, one with a scroll and one with a clay tablet and stylus. They are presumably recording the booty. On the right side of the slab is another fortified building with crenellations, again with Assyrian officials (?) on a flat roof. Between these two fortified buildings is a large structure (the Temple of Haldi?) with gabled roof standing on a platform. There seem to be engaged columns at the front, and on either side of the doorway are two gigantic spears as well as statues of human figures. Behind the figure on the right is a cow and calf, probably of stone or metal. Hanging up on the outside of the temple, and it seems on the inside, are round shields, sometimes with animal's head bosses in the centre. There are two large cauldrons resting on tripods in front of the building. On the roof of the building are Assyrian soldiers who are carrying off round and rectangular shields, in at least one case with an animal's head boss. A gigantic spearhead, probably of metal, is mounted on the roof of the temple. On slab 3 (to the left) is a file of five Assyrian soldiers walking across hilly ground. The first carries a situla in his left hand and has a sack over his shoulder. The second and third soldiers are poorly preserved. The fourth has a shield with lion-headed boss on his back, and the fifth carries a cauldron on a stand. To the right of these soldiers are two Assyrian soldiers weighing booty on a pair of scales, while at the bottom of the hill Assyrian soldiers break up a statue (presumably of metal) with axes.

3. *Evidence of the Urartian Inscriptions*

It is clear, then, that by the time of Sargon, Urartu was very wealthy and had a thriving metalworking industry. Not only were large numbers of finished objects in gold, silver and bronze removed from Musasir, but quantities of ore and precious metal were also taken away, showing that manufacturing was taking place locally. The question that we must now address is how far back beyond the late 8th century this tradition can be traced? For an answer to this problem, we have to turn to Urartian inscriptions. It used to be thought that the earliest Urartian inscriptions on metal were from the time of Minua (Azarpay 1968: 7) who was flourishing about 800 BC. Now, however, more than 40 inscriptions of his predecessor Ishpuini, who brushed against the Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad V in about 820 BC (Fuchs this volume Chapter 09: §1.3) are known (Belli 1991b: 45; Seidl 2004: 18-24).[10] Unfortunately these inscriptions are all on unprovenanced bronze objects, but they cannot be ignored. These objects inscribed with the name of Ishpuini include a silver bowl, a bronze helmet, bronze hubcap ornaments, a bronze disc, and horse breast plates (Seidl 2004: pls. 2c, 6, 22, 24, 28). It is therefore clearly necessary to push the Urartian metalworking tradition back into the 9th century BC, but there is still very little evidence for an active Urartian metalworking industry contemporary with the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II or even Shalmaneser III. By contrast, we have ample evidence of Assyrian metalworking in the time of Ashurnasirpal II.

4. *Comparison of Assyrian and Urartian Metalwork*

In Assyria we are extremely fortunate to have a detailed visual record of the material culture in the reigns of many of the kings in the form of the Assyrian reliefs. Amongst the most informative are the reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC) from the North-West Palace at Nimrud. This is particularly the case with furniture. Ashurnasirpal himself is shown seated on a splendid backless throne, accompanied by attendants and

[10] Seidl 2004: 18, section A, attributed two inscribed bowls from Karmir Blur on epigraphic grounds to Sarduri I, but Salvini (pers. comm.) does not believe these bowls date as early as the reign of Sarduri I.

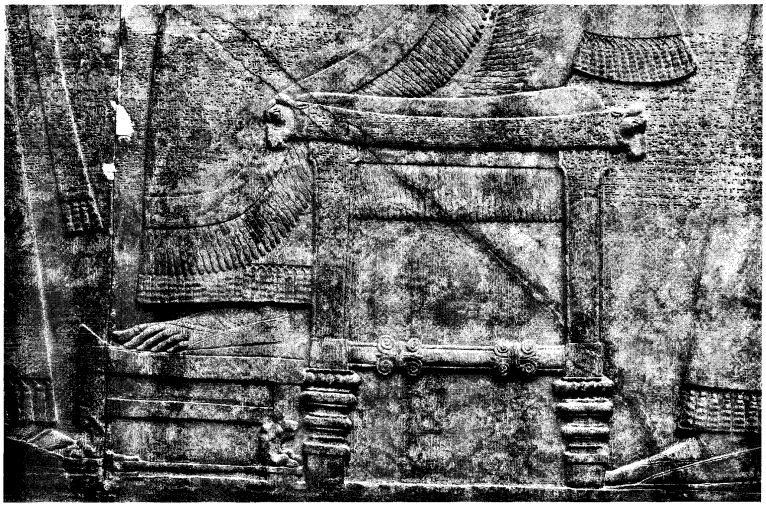

Fig. 31.04. Detail from an Assyrian relief showing the backless throne and footstool of Ashurnasirpal II, from Room G, North-West Palace, Nimrud. British Museum 124565.

Fig. 31.05. Bronze bull's head from Nimrud, w. 7.25 cm. British Museum N 147.

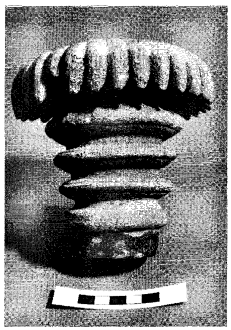

Fig. 31.06. Bronze furniture foot from Nimrud, ht. 14.0 cm. British Museum N 465.

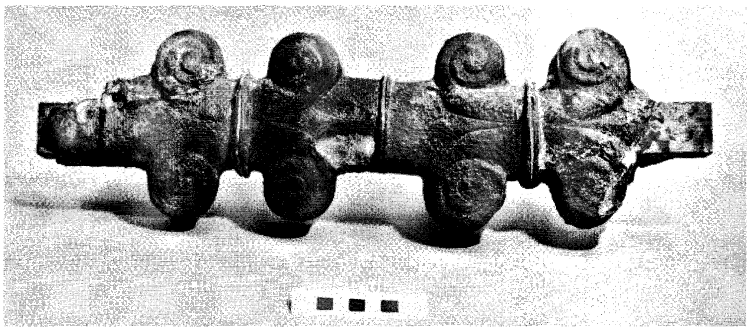

Fig. 31.07. Bronze sleeves with volute decoration from Nimrud. British Museum N 378.

magical figures. The throne is decorated at the corners of the seat with bull's heads and the wooden legs of the throne and the cross-bar are covered with what is evidently bronze sheathing (Fig. 31.04). The bronze sheathing on the cross-bar is embellished with double volute designs. The feet of the throne are also presumably of bronze, and consist of ribbed mouldings surmounted by stylised palm capitals. The king rests his feet on a footstool that has lion's paws at the bottom resting on a thin bar below which are feet that are probably supposed to be conical. This throne is actually one of the rare occasions when the visual record can be tied in with the archaeological record. Thus, in Room AB of the North-West Palace Layard found the remains of a throne that bears a remarkable similarity to the one shown on the relief (Layard 1853: 198-200). Amongst the pieces surviving from this throne and now in the British Museum (Curtis 1996a) are two tapering feet with embossed ribs surmounted by palm capitals (Fig. 31.06), a bronze bull's head (Fig. 31.05) and bronze sleeves in the form of opposed volutes (Fig. 31.07). There is also – and this is not shown on the relief – bronze cut-out ornament

showing winged genies struggling with a winged sphinx and lion-eagles on either side of a sacred tree. This openwork ornament was designed to go round the four sides of a wooden post and obviously decorated the legs of the throne. Apart from the openwork ornament – and its absence may not be very significant as we know that Assyrian artists did not always record small details – it is clear that the pieces in the British Museum come from a backless throne similar to that shown in the Ashurnasirpal relief, and it would not be unreasonable to suggest for them a 9th century date. Even if these pieces are slightly later, however, we have the testimony of the reliefs themselves which show that already in the reign of Ashurnasirpal in the first half of the 9th century BC furniture of a distinctive and iconic kind was being used at the Assyrian court.

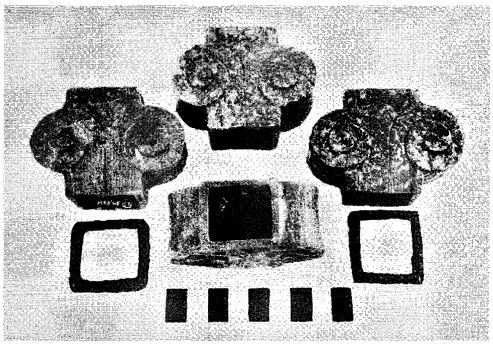

Fig. 31.08. Bronze sleeves with volute decoration from Kayalidere (Burney 1966: pl. XXIa).

Fig. 31.09. Bronze sleeves with volute decoration from Altıntepe (Özgüç 1969: pl. XIX).

Such double volute bronze furniture sleeves have also been found at Kayalidere (Fig. 31.08) to the west of Lake Van (Burney 1966: pl. XXIa) and at Altıntepe 20 km from Erzincan (Fig. 31.09) where they belonged to a stool that was found in Tomb 3 (Özgüç 1969: pl. XIX). In these cases it is difficult to believe that the form was not inspired by Assyrian prototypes, particularly as the Assyrian examples are demonstrably earlier.

Fig. 31.10. Bronze lion's paw furniture foot from Kayalidere, ht. c. 11.5 cm (Burney 1966: pl. XIXc).

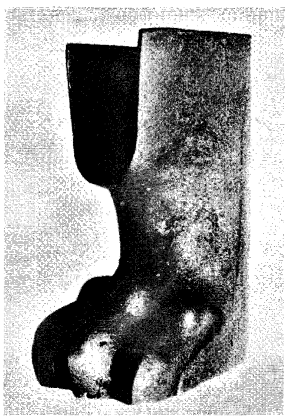

Fig. 31.11. Bronze lion's paw furniture foot from Altıntepe, ht. 11.4 cm (Özgüç 1969: pl. XXIII).

Fig. 31.12. Bronze lion's paw furniture foot from Nimrud, ht. 14.8 cm. British Museum 48-11-4, 86.

It is interesting that at both Kayalidere (Fig. 31.10) and Altıntepe (Fig. 31.11) bronze lion's paws have also been found, evidently from pieces of furniture (Burney 1966: pl. XIXc; Özgüç 1969: pl. XXIII). At Altıntepe there were four examples all from Tomb 3, ranging in height from 10.6 to 12.0 cm. The three examples from Kayalidere appear to be of similar size. All are similar in that they have a U-shaped cut-out at the top of the foot. At Nimrud, Layard found three bronze lion's paws of similar shape and form (Fig. 31.12). They are, however, of hammered bronze whereas the Kayalidere and Altıntepe examples appear to be of cast bronze. Also, they are slightly larger, varying in height 14.7-14.9 cm. Nevertheless, the parallels are close. Admittedly the Nimrud examples were not in a very good archaeological context, having been found in Trench P near the centre of the Acropolis mound. They are therefore difficult to date, and it is of course true that they might have arrived in Nimrud as booty or tribute. However, lion's paws are often shown on the Assyrian reliefs incorporated in pieces of furniture. They occur with footstools or more commonly tables (Curtis 1996a: fig. 10 on p. 179). They are shown already on the Rassam Obelisk dating from the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (Reade 1980: pl. 3). Again, therefore, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the form was developed in Assyria and copied in Urartu.

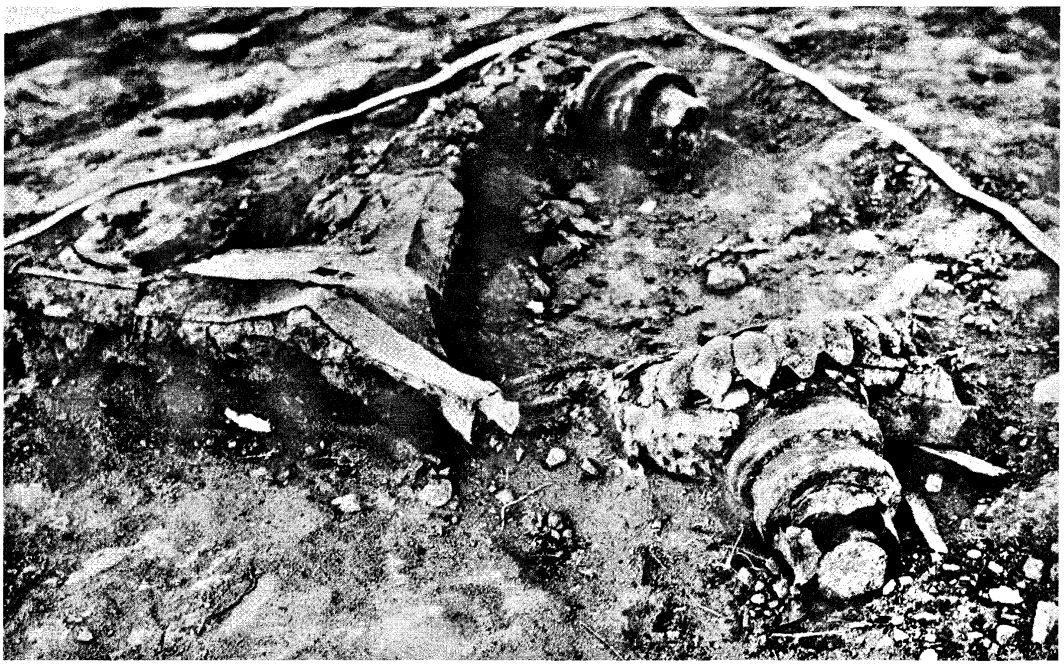

Fig. 31.13. Collapsed tripod table at Altıntepe (Özgüç 1969: pl. XXXVI).

There is one more type of furniture element found at both Altıntepe and Kayalidere that is relevant to our enquiry. This is the stylised palm capital that we saw as part of the feet of Ashurnasirpal's backless throne. From Altıntepe come three furniture feet, actually very similar to the furniture foot in the British Museum found in Room AB, apparently belonging to a tripod table (Özgüç 1969: pl. XXXVI). These tapering feet have embossed ribs and are surmounted by a palm capital or crown of pendant leaves (Fig. 31.13). From Nimrud there are four heavy cast palm capitals (Fig. 31.14), found by Layard in the Room of the Bronzes (Room AB) (Curtis 1996a: pl. 53a). There is also a hammered example from Nimrud, now in the Iraq Museum, very similar to a fragment found at Kayalidere (Fig. 31.15, Burney 1966: pl. XXa). Here again, then, is archaeological evidence for a form which is shown extensively on Assyrian reliefs from the 9th century onwards.

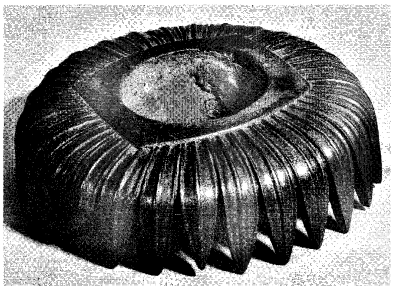

Fig. 31.14. Cast bronze palm capital from Nimrud, w. 15.5 cm. British Museum N 271.

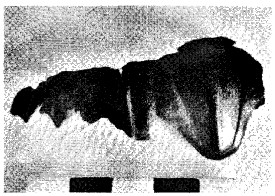

Fig. 31.15. Fragment of hammered bronze palm capital from Kayalidere, w. c. 6.0 cm (Burney 1966: pl. XXa)

I want to consider now more than a dozen figural bronzes from Toprakkale. Unfortunately only three of them were recovered in what passed for an excavation (by Hormuzd Rassam in 1880) and they are now scattered around a number of museums and collections, namely the British Museum, the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, the State Hermitage in St Petersburg, the Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum, the de Vogüé Collection in Paris, and the Stoclet Colletion in Brussels.[11] However, the circumstantial evidence indicates that they all come from Toprakkale and there is no reason to believe that any of them are faked. All the figures are heavy bronze castings, and they show a mixture of a human figure standing alone, human figures standing on the backs of bulls, winged bulls, kneeling bull-lions with wings, a sphinx and a griffin (Figs. 31.16-17).

Fig. 31.16. Bronze furniture fitting in the form of human-headed winged bull from Toprakkale, ht. 21.6 cm. British Museum 91247.

Fig. 31.17. Bronze furniture fitting in the form of a human figure standing on a composite animal from Toprakkale, ht. 21.0 cm. British Museum 91243.

[11] For a catalogue of these pieces see Seidl 1994b: 69-78.

In a number of cases the creatures have inlaid faces of white stone. In some cases Assyrian characteristics can be noted. For example, the figures standing on the backs of bulls have dresses ornamented with squares and rosettes, a sort of decoration familiar from the Assyrian reliefs, and the winged lion with human torso in the Hermitage has around its body a strap with knot very much like that on *lamassu* figures from the Palace of Ashurnasirpal at Nimrud. However, a number of the pieces are inscribed with Urartian hieroglyphs[12] and these composite monsters are of a uniquely Urartian type, similar to the beasts that, as we shall see below, are familiar from items of Urartian popular culture.

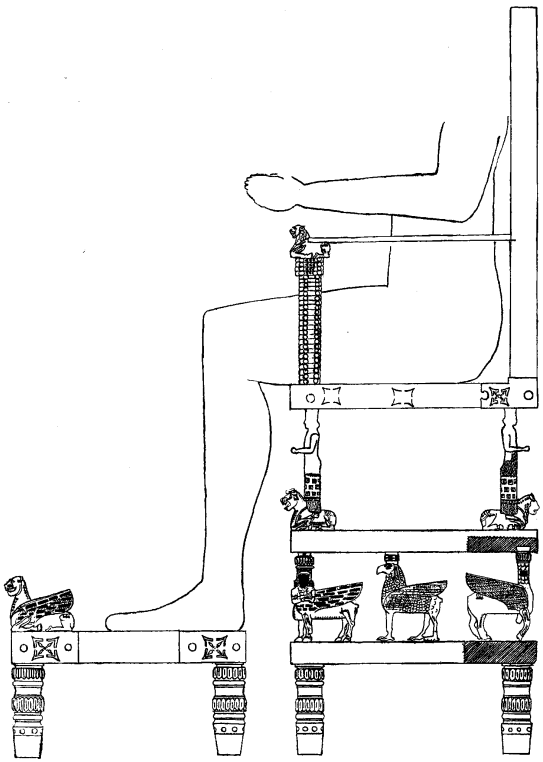

Fig. 31.18. Attempted reconstruction of Toprakkale throne by R.D. Barnett (Barnett 1950: 43 fig. 22).

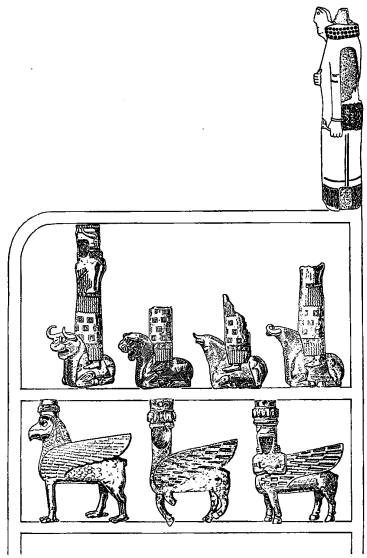

Fig. 31.19. Tentative reconstruction of Toprakkale throne (now superseded) by J.E. Curtis in 1987.

It has long been recognised that these figures and some associated pieces belonged to a piece or pieces of furniture. R.D. Barnett reconstructed a throne and footstool which was plausible (Fig. 31.18) but at least one of the figures is facing inwards and he did not include the magnificent standing figure, height 37.5 cm, in the Vorderasiatisches Museum. I myself attempted a reconstruction in a presentation to a meeting of the British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology in Manchester in December 1987 (Fig. 31.19, previously unpublished) in which, on analogy with the well-known relief of Sargon, I placed the large standing figure at the

[12] As noted by Seidl (2004: 64, see also for more detail 1994b), two of the pieces have traces of cuneiform inscriptions; on palaeographic grounds (the vertical and horizontal wedges overlap [see the Introduction]), Seidl citing Wilhelm (1994) believes these inscriptions should either be earlier than the sole rule of Minua or later than the reign of Rusa I. She wrote that this later period is consistent with a date in the reign of Rusa II, i.e. Rusa son of Argishti, which she believes is also suggested by the provenance and style of the throne elements.

back of the throne. More recently, Ursula Seidl has produced another reconstruction (Fig. 31.20) in which she also places the large figure (which would have been one of two) at the back of the throne (Seidl 1994b: fig. 10; 1996: fig. 8). I particularly like the reconstruction of the figures standing on bulls as Atlas figures with upraised arms, which seems very plausible. Of course, there may be question marks over some of the details, but what is indisputable is that at Toprakkale a very elaborate throne was found incorporating some or all of these bronze figures. Seidl dates the throne to the reign of Rusa II (Seidl 2004: 64),[13] a contemporary of Esarhaddon, but Barnett believed the throne was of 8th century date and had been brought to Toprakkale from an older shrine (Barnett 1982: 362).

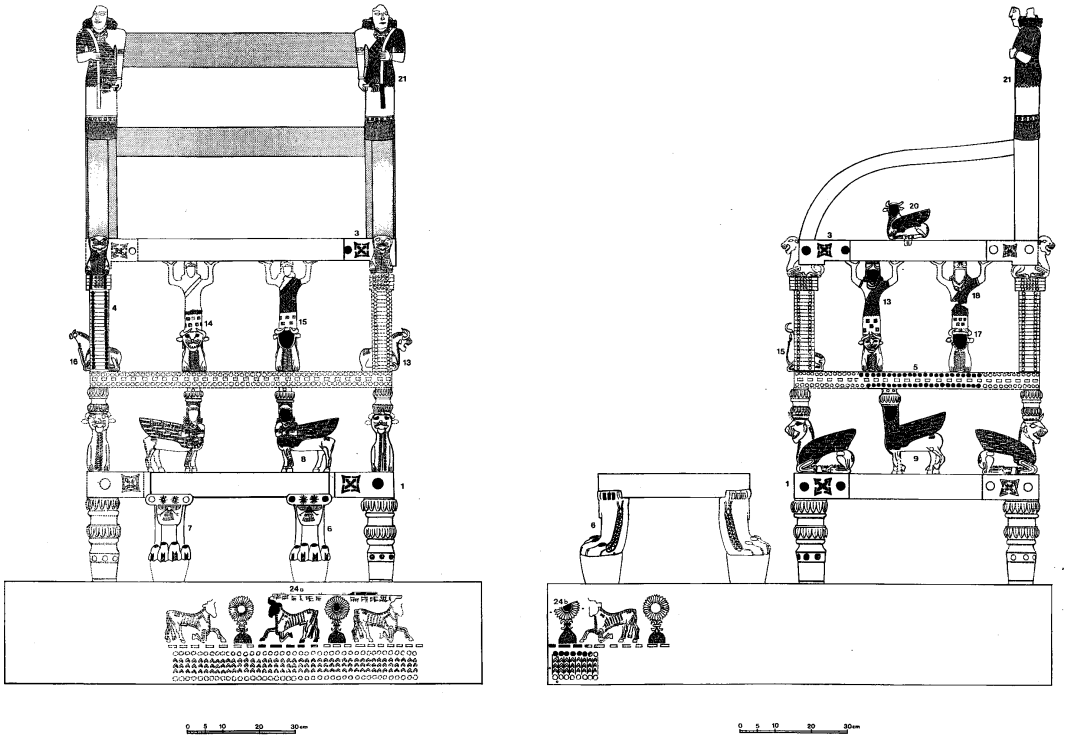

Fig. 31.20. Reconstruction of Toprakkale throne by Ursula Seidl (Seidl 1994b: fig. 10).

Thrones with figures beneath the armrest (Stützfiguren) are also shown in Assyrian art, but they are not common. Probably the earliest thrones of this type are shown on wall paintings at Til Barsip (Thureau-Dangin & Dunand 1936: pls. 49, 52). The figures appear in the space between the seat and the armrest and are bearded men or gods with their hands clasped in front of them. The dating of these wall-paintings is not quite certain, ranging between the reigns of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon. Definitely from the reign of Sargon are representations of two similar thrones on reliefs at Khorsabad. The more elaborate example (Fig. 31.21) has a large standing figure on the back-rest and two rows of supporting figures beneath the arm-rest (Botta 1849-1850: I pl. 18; Albenda 1986: pl. 48). There are two large 'Atlas' figures in the lower row. Another throne of this

[13] For further discussion see Seidl this volume Chapter 12, where she associates this (divine) throne with the throne mentioned in a year name of Rusa son of Argishti erected in Rusahinili Qilbanikai (i.e. Toprakkale).

type is mounted on a wheeled carriage, but here the Atlas figures are replaced by a horse (Botta 1849-50: I pl. 17; Albenda 1986: pl. 47). The best-known throne of this type is of course that on which Sennacherib is seated at the Siege of Lachish; it has three rows of supporting figures consisting of gods wearing horned caps and with their arms upraised. Actual figures of this kind are also attested in the archaeological record. Thus, there are three bronze figures in Assyrian style from the Heraion at Samos that are thought to be supporting figures from thrones, one of a god and the others showing humans (Curtis 1994: figs. 1-11). Then, there is a remarkable figure thought to be from Tell Mahuz to the east of Ashur. It is a massive bronze casting showing a bull-man with upraised arms (Curtis 1995: pl. 13a). The closest parallel to the Toprakkale throne, however, is the throne of Ninlil (Mulissu) shown on rock reliefs in Iraqi Kurdistan (Curtis 1995: pl. 15e). This throne has no arm-rest, but the seat is supported by two rows of figures. In the upper row kings alternate with lion-men with eagle's talons, while below there are two winged human-headed composite monsters and a human figure. The nature of these composite beasts is clearly reminiscent of Urartian art, and we may certainly wonder if there has not been some influence here.

The situation with these elaborate thrones with supporting figures is not then as straightforward as some of the other furniture types we looked at. They do not appear in Assyrian art until the second half of the 8th century, possibly not before the reign of Sargon, by which time the Urartian bronze industry had reached its peak and was manufacturing large amounts of material, much of it in distinctive Urartian style. It would therefore be rash to accord primacy to either region in the production of such pieces of furniture, but it is certainly possible that the form was developed in Urartu before Assyria and that in this case the Assyrians drew their inspiration from Urartu.[14]

Fig. 31.21. Drawing of an Assyrian throne on a relief of Sargon from Khorsabad (Botta 1849-1850: I pl. 18).

[14] At the conference, Ursula Seidl suggested that as the Assyrian and Urartian traditions were approximately contemporary perhaps the origin for such thrones should be sought in another area such as Syria. She also observed that the bronze supporting figures might have been inspired by ivory forms.

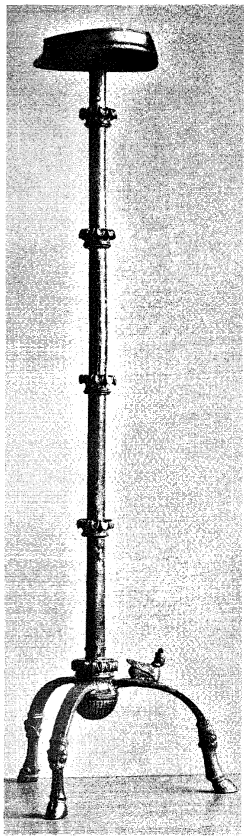

Fig. 31.22. 'Candelabrum' from Toprakkale inscribed with the name of Rusa, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg (Seidl 2004: pl. 4a).

Fig. 31.23. Bronze cauldron with bull's head attachments, resting on a tripod, from Altıntepe. Archaeological Museum, Ankara (Azarpay 1968: pl. 30).

Apart from the thrones with supporting figures there is another type of furniture that may have claims to be an indigenous Urartian type. These are the so-called 'candelabra' of which six have been recovered in excavations, three of iron, and there are a number of unprovenanced examples. These are in reality stands consisting of a shaft on three feet which supports a dish at the top. The best-known example is from Toprakkale (Fig. 31.22) and is inscribed with the name of Rusa.[15] The feet rest on bull's hooves and the shaft or stem is decorated with palm leaf mouldings. There were reclining figures of winged human-headed bulls on top of the legs, of which one survives. Another example, but unprovenanced[16], now in the Israel Museum, has a votive inscription for the god Haldi from Minua (Merhav 1991c: 270 pl. 11a). These candelabra are quite different from anything known in the Assyrian repertoire and have good claims to be Urartian in both inspiration and

[15] Seidl (this volume Chapter 12: n. 2) proposes on the basis of a detailed examination of the iconography dating the candelabrum to the reign of Rusa son of Erimena or Rusa son of Sarduri instead of her previous suggestion of the reign of Rusa son of Argishti (Seidl 2004: 60-61). See Seidl 2007: n. 7.

[16] As pointed out at the conference by O.W. Muscarella, it is now known that the Israel Museum candelabrum comes from Patnos, as shown by the fact that the third lion from the base has been found at that site. See Muscarella 2006a: 154-155.

manufacture. Related to these candelabra in that they also have three feet, often in the form of bull's hooves, are tripods for supporting cauldrons. A particularly splendid example, with bull's head attachments, was found at Altıntepe (Fig. 31.23). The cauldrons themselves, particularly those with attachments, have been discussed in a series of articles by Muscarella, who has attempted to distinguish between Syrian and Urartian traditions (Muscarella 1992b; 2006: 158-9). The importance of cauldrons and tripods in Urartu is underlined by the depiction of two examples in front of the Temple at Musasir. In Assyria cauldrons seem to be entirely absent. It is true that Layard found twelve cauldrons apparently standing on tripods in the Room of the Bronzes at Nimrud, but they are thought to have been booty or tribute brought back to Nimrud and stored there. This is suggested by the fact that some of the tripods, consisting of iron rods with bronze jointing-pieces and bronze feet in the form of bull's hooves or lion's paws, have West Semitic inscriptions giving owner's names that are thought to have originated in the Levant (Barnett 1967). It is therefore unlikely that these Nimrud examples came from Urartu, but there were very probably parallel traditions in Urartu and in Syria.

With furniture as a whole, therefore, we have a mixed picture. It seems likely that in the 9th century and perhaps also in the first half of the 8th century Urartian forms were inspired by Assyrian prototypes, but with the more elaborate forms that emerged in the second half of the 8th century, particularly the thrones with supporting figures, we may have evidence of Urartian innovation. The case with candelabra, tripods and cauldrons is clearer. None of these forms was popular in Assyria, and there is no case for any kind of Assyrian influence with the Urartian examples.

When writing about Assyrian and Urartian furniture the late-lamented Roger Moorey was characteristically cautious, and we may leave the final word on the subject to him (1996: 257):

> This (the Assyro-Urartian tradition) appears without known antecedents producing solid and heavy-looking, square and rectangular furniture weighed down with fittings in cast and sheet metal, and in carved stone, as well as much surface decoration in a whole range of materials. It is not yet known whether it owes anything to Kassite or Old Assyrian furniture. But even here, in the wire-like Urartian vessel-stands of bronze and iron, we may perhaps detect prototypes made originally of reeds or willow: light and mobile, easily assembled from parts and then dismantled for storage or transport.

Moving on now to military equipment,[17] in two detailed studies Tamas Dezsö has shown that the Urartians originally used hemispherical crested helmets and that subsequently conical helmets were borrowed from the Assyrians (Deszö 1998, 2001: 79). Of course, he is referring to the form of the helmet, and not the decoration that is often found on these helmets that often takes a peculiarly Urartian form. With other types of military equipment, such as armour, it is certainly possible that both the Assyrians and Urartians may have been drawing on a shared Hurrian heritage; there are armour scales, for example, from sites such as Nuzi. However, the representations of Urartians on the Balawat gates in the time of both Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III do not show them wearing armour, so here again perhaps they were inspired to introduce armour through contact with Assyria. The situation with chariotry and horse harness may have been different. From Urartu we have a wealth of material relating to chariots and the harnessing of horses, so much so as to suggest that this was a major element of the bronzeworking industry. Again, both cultures may have shared some common heritage here, such as the tradition of decorating harness with bronze plaques and bosses. However, in the reign of Tiglath-pileser III, Assyrian harness appears to undergo a revolution. Horses start to wear decorative headgear and they are festooned with tassels as well as having bells suspended from their necks. Much or all of this influence probably comes from Urartu, as we know from the large number of harness items and bells inscribed with the names of Ishpuini and Minua (Seidl 2004: 20-22, 26-29, 92-120; Muscarella 1978a) that there was a rich tradition of horse gear in Urartu before the reign of Tiglath-pileser III in Assyria. Any influence from Urartu to Assyria in the way of equestrian equipment should not of course come as a surprise, because we know that the Assyrians were obtaining horses from the north-east, from areas controlled by Urartu. Let us consider now a possible representation of an Urartian horse and rider on a Tiglath-pileser relief.

[17] For ninth century Urartian military equipment see Piller this volume Chapter 26.

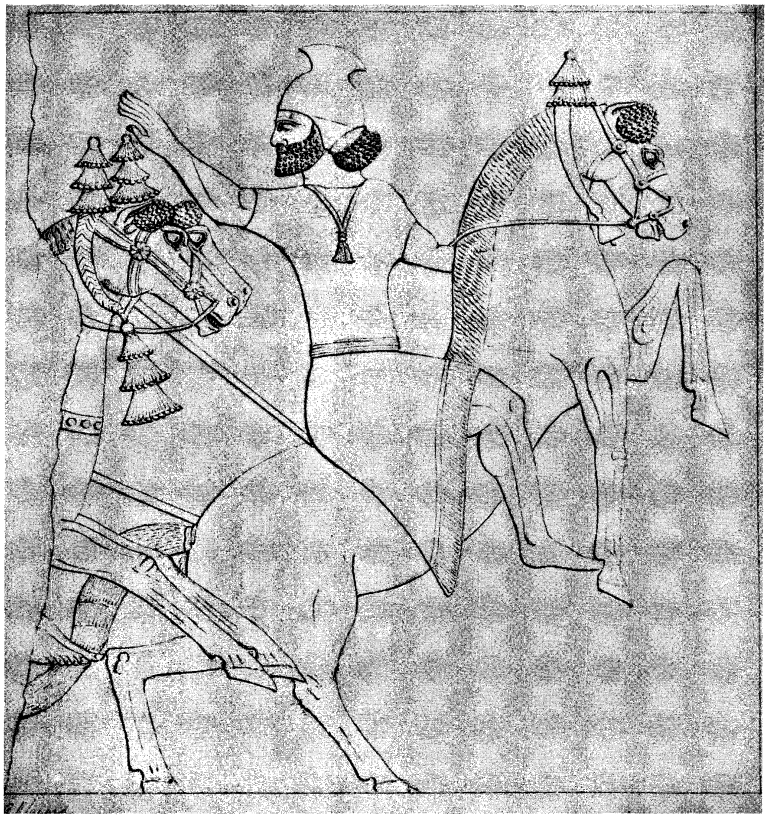

Fig. 31.24. Drawing of an Assyrian relief from the Central Palace (?), Nimrud, showing an Urartian (?) on horseback (Barnett and Falkner 1962: pl. LXIV).

In their volume on the sculptures of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727), Barnett and Falkner have tentatively suggested that five reliefs might be connected with Urartu or Urartians (Barnett & Falkner 1962: pls. 58-59, 64-69). However, only one of these is convincing.[18] This is a slab from the South-West Palace (BM 118905) showing a man on horseback fleeing from two Assyrian horsemen (Fig. 31.24). Barnett identified this rider as an Urartian because he wears a crested helmet, which, although of unique shape, may be loosely compared with other Urartian helmets. He also wears a seal around his neck, which prompted Barnett (Barnett & Falkner 1962: xxiii-xxiv) to identify him as Sarduri, on account of 'the seal about his neck' referred to in the annals. If this rider is indeed Urartian, it is noteworthy that the bridle arrangements and decorations, including brow-band and tassels on top of the head, are very similar to those of the pursuing horses. Thus would seem to imply that in the time of Tiglath-pileser, at least, Assyrian and Urartian harness was similar, perhaps indicating the extent of Assyrian borrowing.

[18] Two slabs from the Central Palace (?) that exist only in drawings show respectively enemies being slaughtered and a prisoner being presented to the king (Barnett & Falkner 1962: pls. 58-59), but there seems to be nothing here to suggest that the defeated people are Urartians. A further relief from the South-West Palace (BM 118907, pls. 66-67) shows Assyrian horsemen pursuing an enemy horseman with 'multiple-corded belt and boots with curving ends'. There is no good reason to identify him as an Urartian. Lastly, the relief BM 118908 (pls. 58-59) shows the capture of Astartu in modern Jordan (Curtis & Reade (eds.) 1995: 62-63), even though the text on this panel describes a campaign in the north.

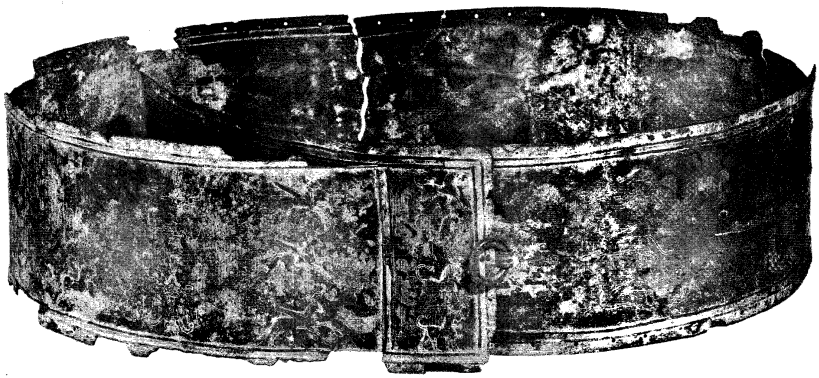

Fig. 31.25. An unprovenanced bronze belt with incised decoration in Urartian style. British Museum 140874.

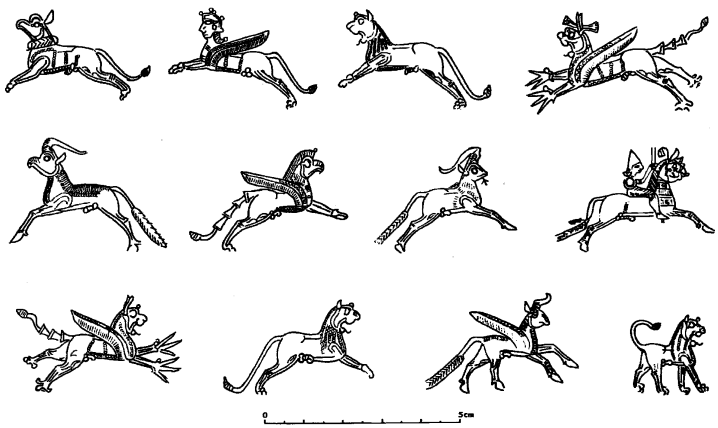

Fig. 31.26. Incised animal designs on belt in Fig. 31.25. Drawing by Ann Searight.

Particularly characteristic of the Urartian metalworking industry are objects made of sheet metal, such as belts with incised decoration (Fig. 31.25).[19] Some 15 years ago Kellner collected together nearly 450 belts and fragments (Kellner 1991a) and to this figure should now be added many more. Unfortunately the vast majority of these belts are from looted sites, but some come from excavations including Ayanis,[20] Kayalidere, Altıntepe, Karmir Blur and Tli in Southern Ossetia. Sometimes the belts have simple geometric decoration, or occasionally they have narrative scenes, but most often they are decorated with fantastic creatures combining elements from different kinds of animal (Fig. 31.26). Thus, there are two- or four-legged beasts incorporating parts of lions, bulls, goats, horses, birds (heads and wings), fishes (bodies and tails) and scorpions (tails) (Curtis 1996b). Sheet metal belts, although undecorated, are known in Assyria, but they are rare. They seem to be particularly characteristic of Urartian material culture, and the range of animal designs is distinctively Urartian.

[19] For a discussion of these belts see Rubinson this volume Chapter 27.

[20] For the example from Ayanis see Rubinson this volume Chapter 27 and Zimansky this volume Chapter 07.

Closely allied to belts, and often having been cut from sheet metal belts and reused, are literally thousands of sheet metal votive plaques that have surfaced on the art market in recent years (for a discussion of them and illustrations of some of the main types see Rehm 2000). Unfortunately very few of these plaques are properly provenanced, but they are thought to derive from Urartian sites such as Patnos and Giyimli. However that may be, many of them have crude representations of figures and they appear to be votive plaques (Fig. 31.27). If that is so, they represent an Urartian tradition that is entirely lacking in Assyria.

Fig. 31.27. An unprovenanced bronze votive plaque with incised decoration in Urartian style. British Museum 1991-6-15, 1.

5. *Conclusions*

On the whole, therefore, the picture is one of interdependence. In the 9th century BC it seems clear that there was a good deal of Assyrian influence on Urartian metalwork, particularly in areas such as furniture. This changed, however, in the second half of the 8th century, when we can see some influence being transmitted from Urartu to Assyria, notably with elaborate forms of furniture, harness equipment and possibly chariot fittings. At the same time, there was a surge of popular culture in Urartu that resulted in the production of sheet metal items decorated in a characteristically Urartian style. These had little or no impact in Assyria. On the whole we may conclude that Assyrian metalwork was influenced surprisingly little by Urartu. For example, amongst the large quantities of jewellery and bronze objects recovered from the four Queens' Tombs at Nimrud in 1989-90, it is difficult to find any evidence of Urartian influence.[21] For many other pieces of jewellery from the tombs Levantine, or even Phoenician, connections are evident. On the whole, therefore, we should perhaps regard Assyrian and Urartian metalwork as parallel traditions, with evidence of influence from one culture or the other at particular times, but with both industries mostly operating independently from one another.

[21] Michael Roaf has suggested to me (pers. comm.) that the four-winged angel figures on the golden crown from Tomb III show signs of Urartian influence, but I do not find this convincing. Rather, I would agree with R.M. Boehmer who has suggested in a recent article (2006) that the best parallels for these figures are to be found in Syro-Hittite art of the early first millennium BC.

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Modern works are cited by author and date according to the Harvard system. Internet sources are referred to either by the author's surname and the year consulted or, if the author's name is not known, the website and year consulted (e.g. de.wikipedia.org 2007). The editors have not sought to impose on the authors a single format for citing ancient texts, but have accepted the preferences of the contributors.

Abbreviations

AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHw	W. von Soden 1965-1981. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden
AMI	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*
AMIT	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan*
BAR IS	British Archaeological Reports International Series
CAD	A.L. Oppenheim & E. Reiner (eds.) 1956-. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Chicago-Glückstadt
CTN 5	H.W.F. Saggs 2001. *The Nimrud Letters, 1952*, Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud V, British School of Archaeology in Iraq, London
CTU	M. Salvini 2008. *Corpus dei testi urartei* Vols. 1-3. *Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia*, Documenta Asiana 8, Rome
HchI	F.W. König 1955-1957. *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften*, AfO Beiheft 8, Graz
IFŽ	*Istoriko-filologičeskij Žurnal [Historical-Philological Journal] Patma-Banasirakan Handes*, Yerevan
I.N.	*Ivories from Nimrud*
IstMitt	*Istanbuler Mitteilungen*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
PNA	*The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*
RlA	*Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*
SAA	State Archives of Assyria
SAA 1	S. Parpola 1987. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part I. Letters from Assyria and the West*, SAA 1, Helsinki
SAA 4	I. Starr 1990. *Queries to the Sun God: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*, SAA 4, Helsinki
SAA 5	G.B. Lanfranchi & S. Parpola 1990. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part II. Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces*, SAA 5, Helsinki
SAA 7	F.M. Fales & J.N. Postgate 1992. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part I: Palace and Temple Administration*, SAA 7, Helsinki
SAA 11	F.M. Fales & J.N. Postgate 1995. *Imperial Administrative Records, Part II: Provincial and Military Administration*, SAA 11, Helsinki
SAA 15	A. Fuchs & S. Parpola 2001. *The Correspondence of Sargon II, Part III. Letters from Babylonia and the Eastern Provinces*, SAA 15, Helsinki
SAA 16	M. Luukko & G. Van Buylaere 2002. *The Political Correspondence of Esarhaddon*, SAA 16, Helsinki
SAAS	State Archives of Assyria Studies

Sg 8 Sargon's Letter to the God Ashur. For the text see W. Mayer 1983. Sargons Feldzug gegen Urartu – 714 v. Chr., Text und Übersetzung, *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 115: 65-132

SMEA *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*

UKN Nos 1–370: G.A. Melikishvili 1960. *Urartskie Klinoobraznye Nadpisi [Urartian cuneiform inscriptions]*, Moscow. Nos. 371-533: G.A. Melikishvili 1971. Urartskie klinoobraznye nadpisi II. Otkrytija i Publikacii 1959-1970 gg. [Urartian cuneiform inscriptions II. Discoveries and publications 1959-1970], *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* 1971: 229-255; 267-293

UPD I.M. D'jakonov, 1963. *Urartskie pis'ma i dokumenty* [*Urartian letters and documents*], Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, Moskva - Leningrad

VDI *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii [Messenger of Ancient History]*

ZA *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*

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